

Presentation of a Newly Discovered Manuscript of La Boétie's *Discours de la servitude volontaire* and Hypotheses on the Datation of the BnF Manuscripts

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In the collections of the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC is a French manuscript miscellany, shelf mark Vb. 49, with the words "Melange de pieces" written on the spine of its original, late sixteenth-century sheepskin binding. The documents bound in the codex are not themselves "originals" but rather duplicates copied into it. They include, among other texts, a treatise on the distribution of ecclesiastical authority between the French monarch and the pope followed by a related discussion of punishments and jurisdictional issues for different categories of malefactors; poems by Catherine Desroches; speeches delivered to the Queen Mother and to Henri III by various regional authorities; a letter and a speech concerning the possible marriage of Queen Elizabeth of England to the Duc d'Anjou; letters from Elizabeth herself to Henri III and to the Queen Mother on the subject of Michel de Castelnau, ambassador to England; letters from Henri III of Navarre to the Parliament of Paris and to the Faculty of Theology of the Sorbonne; a copy in French of the will of Michel de L'Hospital; and, from fol. 44r to fol. 60v, a heretofore unidentified copy of Étienne de La Boétie's *Discours de la Servitude volontaire*.¹

As this intriguing list of documents suggests, Vb. 49 merits a comprehensive analysis. My remarks in this essay will, however, be focused on the copy of the *Servitude volontaire* contained in it and on the four sixteenth- and seventeenth century manuscripts of La Boétie's treatise held at the Bibliothèque nationale de France. After describing the Folger manuscript, I turn to a dispute concerning the dating of the copies at the BnF, basing my analyses in large part on watermarks. As C. M. Briquet, author of the monumental *Filigraanes: dictionnaire historique des marques du papier dès leur apparition vers 1282 jusqu'en 1600*, readily

¹ For a brief overview of French holdings at the Folger Shakespeare Library, see Phyllis K. Leffler and John C. Rule, "French History Holdings in the Folger Library," *French Historical Studies*, vol. 9, n° 3, 1976, pp. 532-536. Leffler and Rule do not mention Vb. 49 in their discussion.

acknowledged, watermarks are an inexact science.² Nonetheless, used judiciously they can provide valuable information, particularly when corroborated by other evidence. Most of the manuscripts considered in this essay have recognizable watermarks and their identification can help resolve lingering questions about the dating of the different copies of the *Servitude volontaire*. They also turn out to be intriguing for an additional reason: the Folger copy and two out of the four Paris copies are on paper made by papermakers operating in and around Troyes, with a particular concentration in the town of Châlons-sur-Marne.³ Whether this is significant remains to be determined. After putting forth my findings concerning papermakers and the dating question, I briefly present and discuss some of the variants found in the Folger manuscript, comparing its text with that of the early manuscripts held at the BnF as well as a manuscript of the *Servitude volontaire* held at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana di Milano. Once belonging to Gian Vincezo Pinelli, this relatively unknown copy has recently been described by J.-E. Girot in an article that also briefly discusses a manuscript of the *Servitude volontaire* found at the Archives de Chambéry in the *livre de raison* of Jean de Piochet.⁴ I conclude the essay with some thoughts about productive areas for further research, some of which I hope to pursue, and all of which would benefit from the expertise and the legwork of other scholars.

² For a thoughtful discussion of Briquet's methods and the uses and abuses of "filigranology," published as the introduction to Briquet's collected "minor" works, see Allan H. Stevenson, "Briquet and the Future of Paper Studies," in *Briquet's Opuscula: The Complete Works of Dr. C. M. Briquet without Les Filigranes* (Hilversum, The Paper Publications Society, 1955), pp. xv-l.

³ The peculiar situation of Châlons-sur-Marne during the Wars of Religion—a royalist town in the middle of Ligue territory that managed to maintain a certain amount of political autonomy and avoid the extremes of anti-Protestantism reached elsewhere—has recently been the subject of two sustained studies. See Mark W. Konnert, *Civic Agendas and Religious Passions: Châlons-sur-Marne during the French Wars of Religion, 1560-1594*, Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies (Kirkville: Truman State University, 1997) and *Local Politics in the French Wars of Religion: The Towns of Champagne, the Duc de Guise, and the Catholic League, 1560-95* (Burlington, Ashgate, 2006). Unfortunately for the current discussion, Konnert's studies address neither paper-making nor printing. On these subjects, see Amédée Lhote, *Histoire de l'imprimerie à Châlons-sur-Marne: notices biographiques et bibliographiques sur les imprimeurs, libraires, relieurs et lithographes (1488-1894) avec marques typographiques et illustrations* (Châlons-sur-Marne and Paris: 1894; reprint, Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1969) and Louis Le Clert, *Le Papier: Recherches et notes pour servir à l'histoire du papier, principalement à Troyes et aux environs depuis le quatorzième siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris: A l'Enseigne de Pégase, 1926).

⁴ See J.-E. Girot, "Une version inconnue du *Discours de la Servitude volontaire* de La Boétie," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, n° 3, 2001, pp. 551-565. The shelf mark for the codex containing the copy of the *Servitude volontaire* at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana di Milano is A 70 Inf. For the manuscript at the Archives de Chambéry, it is Série I J 279 (1). To my knowledge, the Piochet manuscript, which I have not yet had the opportunity to see, was first signaled by Jean Paul Barbier, *Ma Bibliothèque poétique*, Deuxième partie. Ronsard (Geneva: Droz, 1990), p. 326.

Folger Vb. 49

Henry Folger acquired the codex currently bearing the shelfmark Vb. 49 in early 1925 from the W. T. Smedley collection. The item appears as No. 42 in the Smedley catalogue. Smedley had purchased it at a Sotheby's auction of manuscripts once belonging to the great collector Sir Thomas Phillipps. In the Sotheby's sales catalogue, the manuscript is listed under the heading "MARY Q. OF SCOTS. RECUEIL DE PIÈCES HISTORIQUES DU SEIZIÈME SIÈCLE." This appellation may explain Smedley's interest in the manuscript—he was a collector of documents relating to Queen Elizabeth—as well as the fact that the copy of the *Servitude volontaire* in it has escaped noticed by scholars of the French Renaissance. Indeed, among the documents found in the manuscript that are listed by name in the catalogue, only one is singled out for particular attention: "DISCOURS TOUCHANT LA ROYNE D'ANGLETERRE CONTRE LA ROYNE D'ESCOSSE (Mary Q. of Scots), trouvé entre les papiers de feu Cavagnes." This "discours" was subsequently extracted from the manuscript and is currently at the Morgan Library in New York with the shelf mark MA 897. The catalogue description of the manuscript also claims, without explaining why, that it probably belonged to Jacques-Auguste de Thou.⁵

A note in pencil on the inside of the front cover of the manuscript indicates that it was once #4609 in Phillipps' manuscript collection. In the Phillipps catalogue, it is entitled "Melanges Historiques, &c." The brief description of the manuscript there mentions only that it includes a "Discours sur la Majesté & Dignité du Roy" as well as a "D^e sur la Royne d'Angleterre, & la Reyne d'Escosse, &c. &c." Phillipps purchased the manuscript from John Thomas Payne, an eminent bookseller, ca. 1830.⁶ In addition to rehearsing much of this information, Seymour de Ricci includes two additional details in his census of medieval and Renaissance manuscripts in the United States and in Canada. First, the manuscript apparently belonged to someone by the name of Connay ca. 1600. (The name Connay or Connays appears at the top of fol. 1r of the manuscript; see Figure 1.) Second, the portion of the manuscript currently at the Morgan Library was removed by someone by the name of Pearson. Curiously, in his otherwise exhaustive list of the manuscript's contents, de Ricci omits any reference to La Boétie's treatise.⁷

Vb. 49 is foliated 1-198 in the same hand, although folios 102-114, 168-183, and 186-189 are wanting. The whereabouts of folios 102-114 are known—

⁵ See item #507 in the Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge sales catalogue for June 15-18, 1908.

⁶ See Thomas Phillipps, *The Phillipps Manuscripts: Catalogus librorum manuscriptorum in bibliotheca D. Thomae Phillipps. BT.* (Impressus Typis Medio-Montanis, 1837-1871; reprint, With an Introduction by A. N. L. Munby. London: The Holland Press, 1968). On Phillipps' life and collection, including his relationship with Payne, see A.N.L. Munby, *Portrait of an Obsession* (London: Constable, 1967).

⁷ See Seymour de Ricci, *Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the United States and Canada*, 3 vols. (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1935), vol. I, pp. 449-450.

they are now in the Morgan Library. The location of the other missing folios is not known. The documents copied into the codex are in two different professional scribal hands. The first hand is found through folio 143 while the second is found from folio 144 to the end of the manuscript. Many folios are blank. This fact, along with the binding and the high quality of the paper, demonstrate that it was a fairly deluxe manuscript.

All of the paper in the manuscript has the same watermark. It is comprised of a capital letter "B" within a shield surmounted by a crown and a quatrefeuilles on a stem, with the name NICOLASLEBE in a banner below. A member of a prominent paper making family—we will see the Le Bé name again—, Nicolas Le Bé was active in Châlons from around 1553 to 1605. The presence of the papermaker's name in the banner with a distinctive error—the "A" in Nicolas is upside down—makes precise identification of the watermark possible. It corresponds exactly with Briquet #8081. According to Briquet, paper bearing this watermark appears in the early 1580s. Given this information and the fact that none of the documents in the manuscript bears a date later than 1585, it seems reasonable to assume that the manuscript was composed in the late 1580s or early 1590s. In any case, it was made after the first printed editions of the *Servitude volontaire* were published in 1577, which is the single most important issue when it comes to the dating of the manuscripts.

The manuscript opens with a "Table sommaire des matieres et temes en ce present livre ou registre" (1r; see Figure 1). In the second hand is added "Jusques au feuille 144." On folio 144r is a "Table du contenu en ce presente repertoire Cy après transcript" listing the contents in the second part of the manuscript. The entry for the *Servitude volontaire* in the "Table sommaire" reads "Discours ample pour monstrier que la domminacion de plusieurs ne peult estre bonne fol. xliij" (1r). This somewhat misleading designation—the *Servitude volontaire* was not "rebaptised" (to use Montaigne's expression) *Le contr'un* for no reason—is expanded on the first page of the treatise.⁸ Its title there is "Discours pour monstrier que la domminacion de plusieurs ne peult estre bonne Actendu que la puissance d'un seul se trouve bien souvent Insupportable Mesmes quand Il advient quil prent ce tiltre de Maistre dont on peult voir quil a este mal conclud et Infere en ce distic françois" (44r; see Figure 2). Of the extant titles for the treatise, this is by far the most elaborate. The "distic françois" in question presumably consists of the two verses from the *Iliad* that open the *Servitude volontaire*. Nowhere in the manuscript is the author of the treatise mentioned.

⁸ Early in "De l'amitié," Montaigne writes that "C'est vn discours auquel il donna nom *De la Servitude volontaire* [sic], mais ceus qui l'ont ignore, l'ont bien proprement depuis rebaptisé, le contre vn.," Michel de Montaigne, *Essais de Messire Michel Seigneur de Montaigne* (Bordeaux: S Millanges, 1580), f. 252.

The BnF Manuscripts and the Dating Debate

As is well known, the first complete print edition of the *Servitude volontaire* appeared anonymously in 1577, almost fifteen years after La Boétie's death in 1563, in the third volume of a collection of historical documents and Protestant writings entitled *Memoires de l'estat de France, sous Charles Neufiesmes*.⁹ Three years earlier, in 1574, reworked fragments of the *Servitude volontaire* had appeared in an earlier Protestant work, this one responding to the 1572 St. Bartholomew Day Massacres.¹⁰ In 1579, the Parliament of Bordeaux had copies of the *Memoires* burned.¹¹ Thereafter, La Boétie's treatise seems to have

⁹ Simon Goulart, *MEMOIRES de l'estat de France. SOUS CHARLES Neufiesmes*, 3 vols. (Meiddelbourg [Geneva?]: 1577). The version of *On Voluntary Servitude* published in the *Memoires* is often said to be entitled "Contr'un" but this is not the case in any of the editions I have consulted, which include all those at the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris and the copy at Duke University's Perkins Library. On the publication history of the *Servitude volontaire* in different editions of the *Memoires*, see J. Calémard, *L'Édition originale de "La Servitude volontaire"* (Paris: Giraud-Badin, 1947), which gathers together the two-part article by the same name appearing in the *Bulletin du Bibliophile*, May-June 1947, pp. 209-229 and 268-283. Claude Barman identified a stand-alone edition of the *Servitude volontaire* dated 1577 and entitled *Vue description de la Tyrannie, et des Tyrans, avec les moyens de se garantir de leur joug*. See Claude Barman, "Exemplaires uniques ou rarissimes conservés à la Bibliothèque municipale de Grenoble," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, vol. 51, n° 1, 1989, pp. 139-145. For further discussion of this edition of the *Servitude volontaire*, including the contention that it probably postdates the 1577 and the 1578 editions of the *Memoires*, see Jacques Joseph Desplat, *La Boétie: Le magistrat aux nombreux mystères* (Le Buge: PLB éditeur, 1992), pp. 84-86. On page 358 of his book, Desplat has reproduced the title page of the *Vue description*.

¹⁰ This text was first published in Latin and then quickly translated into French and Dutch. See Nicolas Barnaud [?], *Dialogi ab Eusebio Philadelpho cosmopolita in gallorum et cæterarum nationum gratiam compositi, quorum primus ab ipso auctore recognitus & auctus: alter vero in lucem nunc primum editus fuit*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh [Bâle?]: Jacobus Janæus, 1574), Nicolas Barnaud [?], *Le Réveille-Matin des François, et de leurs voisins, composé par Eusebe Philadelphus Cosmopolite, en forme de Dialogues*, 2 vols. (Edimbourg [Lausanne?]: De l'imprimerie de Jacques Janes, 1574), and Nicolas Barnaud [?], *Der Francoysen ende haerder nagebueren Morghenoecker door Eusebium Philadelphum. Overgheset door Jan Fruyters* (Dordrecht: 1574). The reworked French text that appears in *Le Réveille-matin des François* can be found in an appendix of the Flammarion edition of the *Servitude volontaire* (Paris: 1983). The Latin text can be found in Paul Bonnecfons's edition of La Boétie's *Œuvres complètes* (Bordeaux: G. Gounouilhau, 1892) and is also reprinted in Louis Desgraves's edition of the *Œuvres complètes* (Bordeaux: William Blake and Co., 1991). Digitized versions of the full text of the Latin edition and of French editions are also available through Early English Books Online. For a detailed comparison of two different French editions of the *Réveille-matin*, see Barbier, *Ma Bibliothèque patétique*, *op. cit.*, pp. 379-383. For further discussion of the early print editions mentioned here, as well as an overview of the manuscripts held at the BnF discussed at more length below, see Michel Magnien, *Etienne de La Boétie* (Paris: Méméni, 1997).

¹¹ On the burning of the *Memoires*, see Louis Desgraves, "Introduction," in *Œuvres complètes d'Etienne de La Boétie*, ed. Louis Desgraves (Périgord: William Blake and Co., 1991), pp. 9-44, at p. 27.

circulated covertly as a manuscript (Cardinal Richelieu is said to have sought it) until 1727, when it would appear in print again as an appendix to a Pierre Coste edition of Montaigne's *Essais*.¹²

Because of this belated and complicated print history, the dating of the manuscript tradition is of great interest. Do the manuscripts predate or postdate the print tradition? Which manuscript is the earliest one? Does the earliest copy also offer the best text? The debate over these questions has focused on three early manuscripts of the *Servitude volontaire* housed at the Bibliothèque nationale de France. They are the de Mesmes manuscript (Fonds français 839), the Dupuy manuscript (Fonds Dupuy 239, bound with another document with the *cote* Dupuy 238), and an unnamed manuscript (Fonds français 20157). There is consensus that a fourth manuscript of the *Servitude volontaire*, also housed at the BnF (Fonds français 17298), is a later copy.¹³ I will nonetheless suggest below that it is of more than passing interest.

Nadia Gontarbert has undertaken the most extensive study of the manuscript tradition. She dates the three early manuscripts of the *Servitude volontaire* at the Bibliothèque nationale to the sixteenth century and contends that they all predate the print tradition. Based on a formidable philological analysis, she asserts that the de Mesmes manuscript is the oldest. In her

¹² On Richelieu, see Tallemant des Réaux, *Les Historiettes*, ed. Georges Mongrédien, 8 vols., t. 2 (Paris: Garnier Frères, n.d.), p. 48. According to Magnien, the first printed edition of the *Servitude volontaire* after the sixteenth century was Etienne de La Boétie, "Discours d'Estienne de La Boétie, de la Servitude volontaire Ou le Contr'un," in *Essais de Michel Seigneur de Montaigne*, ed. P. Coste (La Haye: P. Gosse & J. Néaulme, 1727), pp. 74-136. See Magnien #17. I have examined another 1727 Coste edition of the *Essais* (Geneva: M. M. Bousquet & Comp.), which also contains the *Servitude volontaire* on pages 74-136 of the fifth volume. According to Gabriel Richou, ed., *Inventaire de la Collection des ouvrages et documents réunis par J.-F. Payen et J.-B. Bastide sur Michel de Montaigne* (Paris: Librairie de Léon Téchener, 1878), a single pre-publication copy remains of a 1724 censored edition of the *Essais* that was to contain the text of the *Servitude volontaire* (14). This information is repeated in the *Catologue générale des livres imprimés de la Bibliothèque nationale*, vol. 117 (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1932), entry #176 under the article "Montaigne." I have examined the copy in question and determined that the bibliographical information recorded in the catalogues is incorrect. In fact, these volumes comprise an imperfect example of Coste's 1745 edition, 7 vols. (Paris: Martinet). The misidentification occurred because the title page is missing and, in a footnote dated "20 octobre 1724" on page 2 of volume VII, the censor Blanchard records his approval of the text of Montaigne's letters and Coste's notes to the *Essais*. (A manuscript note on the flyleaf of volume I of the misidentified copy points to this footnote in justifying the 1724 as the publication date of the text.) This approval however is not evidence of the text's publication in 1724, but rather indicates that it was in 1724 that Blanchard approved the letters and notes for publication. The note in question, which appears in numerous and perhaps all Coste editions of the *Essais*, is found on page 2 of volume VII of the 1745 edition.

¹³ For a succinct description of these manuscripts, see, in addition to the editions of the *Servitude volontaire* cited here, Desplat, *La Boétie: Le magistrat aux nombreux mystères*, p. 84; Magnien, *Etienne de La Boétie*, pp. 19-20; and Girot, "Une version inconnue," p. 552, n. 5.

opinion, it is also the best text, by which she means the closest to a presumed original, and should therefore continue to be used as the basis for modern editions. She suggests that the other extant manuscripts descend from the de Mesmes copy. Moreover, according to Gontarbert, Français 20157 was possibly the copy used to prepare the text of the *Servitude volontaire* found in the *Memoires*.¹⁴ She also argues that two related texts appended to the de Mesmes copy of the *Servitude volontaire* but in a different hand from it, one entitled "Extraits du livre de La boétie pour y respondre" and the other entitled "Contre La Boétie," were written more or less contemporaneously with the production of the copy of the *Servitude volontaire* they are bound with.¹⁵ For this reason, she suggests that "Contre La Boétie" offers insight into the early reception of the *Servitude volontaire* before its publication as Protestant propaganda in the 1570s colored the text's meaning.

Français 839 (the 'de Mesmes' manuscript)

Gontarbert's hypothesis about the date of composition of the "Extraits" and "Contre La Boétie" does not survive careful scrutiny. I adduce two kinds of evidence to support this contention. The first concerns the paper on which these documents are written and the second concerns a reference in "Contre La Boétie" to a published work. The "Extraits" and "Contre La Boétie" are written on paper bearing a distinctive watermark that probably dates from the 1580s. Based on the coat of arms of the Université de Paris, the watermark consists of three Fleurs de Lys in a chevron formation within a shield, surmounted by a book suspended from clouds. Above the shield is a quatrefeuilles on a stem while below it there is a banner containing the name SONIVELLE. This watermark, used by Siméon Nivelles le jeune, corresponds with Briquet #1843, as Michel Magnien has already noted.¹⁶

¹⁴ See Nadia Gontarbert, "Pour une lecture politique de *La Servitude volontaire* d'Estienne de La Boétie," *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Montaigne*, n°13-14, 1983, pp. 93-104 and "Pour une lecture politique de la *Servitude volontaire* II," *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Montaigne*, n° 15-16, 1983, pp. 61-84, as well as her prefatory essays in Etienne de La Boétie, *De la servitude volontaire, ou, Contr'un*, ed. Nadia Gontarbert (Paris: Gallimard, 1993). Gontarbert recapitulated her fundamental findings, unfortunately without responding to the critiques of Bourgeon discussed below, in Nadia Gontarbert, "La Servitude volontaire: Pour une réappropriation du langage," in *Etienne de La Boétie: Sage révolutionnaire et poète périgourdin*, ed. Marcel Tetel (Paris: H. Champion, 2004), pp. 307-316. According to Calemard, the first modern edition of the *Servitude volontaire* to be based on the de Mesmes manuscript was Étienne de La Boétie, *Notice bio-bibliographique sur La Boétie l'ami de Montaigne suivie de La Servitude volontaire, donnée pour la première fois selon le vrai texte de l'auteur, d'après un manuscrit contemporain et authentique*, ed. J.-F. Payen (Paris: Firmin Didot Frères, 1853).

¹⁵ A transcription of the text of the "Extraits du texte de La Boétie pour y repondre"—or at least of the readily legible parts—may be found in Gontarbert's edition of *De la Servitude volontaire ou Contr'un*, pp. 196-211.

¹⁶ See C. M. Briquet, *Les Filigranes: Dictionnaire historique des marques du papier dès leur apparition vers 1282 jusqu'en 1600*, 2nd ed., 4 vols. (Leipzig: Verlag von Karl W.

"Contre La Boétie" also contains a reference to the Stephanus edition and translation of Callimachus' hymns and epigrams, *Callimachi Cyrenaei hymni (cum suis scholiis graecis) & epigrammata*, published in Geneva in 1577. At the top of fol. 16r of the manuscript, we find the following sentence, which quotes in Latin translation from the "Hymn to Jupiter" by Callimachus: "Le poete Callimachus dict ainsy a Jupiter Ab joue sunt Reges post jouem nihil est divinius usque Regibus." This translation resembles that of Stephanus, which is included in an appendix to *Callimachi Cyrenaei hymni*: "Ab Ioue sunt reges. nihil est diuinius vsquam/Regibus" (111). Moreover, in the margins of fol. 16r of "Contre La Boétie," we find a page number ("pa. 5") and possible variants for a word in the original Greek—is it λῦξιν τᾶξιν or λᾶξιν? The handwritten Latin text continues for more than half the page, and then the author remarks, "Cecy se dira en partant de Stephanus." On page 5 of the 1577 Callimachus edition, the reader will find both the Greek verse quoted in Latin translation in the de Mesmes manuscript ("Εἰς δὲ Διὸς Βασιλῆς. ἐπεὶ Διὸς οὐδὲν ἀνάκτων/Θειότερον") and, in the marginal scholia of the Greek text of the hymn, a gloss to the next line in the poem that records the same variants listed in the de Mesmes manuscript.

Based on this evidence, I conclude that "Contre La Boétie" could not have been written before 1577, date of the publication of the third volume of the *Memoires de l'estat de France* in which the *Servitude volontaire* first appeared in print.¹⁷ Therefore, the two texts bound with the de Mesmes copy of the *Servitude volontaire* do not predate the publication by Protestants of La Boétie's treatise.

The more significant debate concerns the dating of the de Mesmes copy of the *Servitude volontaire* itself and not the dating of the texts bound with it. Jean-Louis Bourgeon has vigorously and influentially contested Gontarbert's assessment of the manuscript. He argues that such details as handwriting and paper size clearly date the copy of the *Servitude volontaire* in the de Mesmes manuscript to the seventeenth century.¹⁸ Bourgeon concludes that modern editions of the *Servitude volontaire* should be based on the 1577 edition of the *Memoires de l'estat de France* or on Français 20157. Françoise Bayard affirms this position in her "Présentation" to the Imprimerie nationale edition of the

Hiersemann, 1923). Briquet remarks that "Les types 1836 à 1846, aux armes de l'Université de Paris, sont toujours accompagnés du nom de Siméon Nivelles, qui était l'un des papetiers jurés de l'Université. Les Nivelles étaient de Troyes et l'un d'eux, Siméon, exploitait dès 1511, la papeterie de Vannes. Il est possible que ce Siméon ait eu un fils, ou un successeur de même nom que lui, puisqu'on trouve ce nom filigrané dans du papier jusqu'aux dernières années du XVI^e siècle" (*Filigranes*, t. I, p. 136). In his massively researched tome on the paper and papermakers of the Troyes region, Le Clerc explains that Siméon did indeed have a son. See Le Clerc, *Le Papier*, t. II, p. 409. See also Raymond Gaudriault, *Filigranes et autres caractéristiques des papiers fabriqués en France aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles* (Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1995), p. 249.

¹⁷ This manuscript deserves a more detailed study of marginal comments and probable sources, as Gontarbert herself remarks.

¹⁸ Jean-Louis Bourgeon, "La Boétie [sic] Pamphlétaire," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, vol. 51, n° 2, 1989, pp. 289-300.

Servitude volontaire, which is indeed based on Français 20157 and the *Memoires*.¹⁹ Nonetheless, while Gontarbert is mistaken about the dating of the “Extraits,” my findings strongly suggest that the copy of the *Servitude volontaire* bound with it does date to the sixteenth century, as she contended. My findings also support the possibility that this manuscript is the oldest of the known copies, although they do not prove it. (I do not seek here to resolve the even thornier question of which manuscript offers the best text, although I will suggest in concluding that too much concern for the identification of the best text may distract us from potentially more fruitful avenues of inquiry.)

Bourgeon contends that the manuscript is not written in a sixteenth century hand. Fortunately, since the debates of the paleographers may be infinite, I can adduce other evidence to support my skepticism about his objection. Yet again, the manuscript in question is on paper bearing a readily identifiable watermark. It consists of the device of Charles IX: two interlaced columns surmounted by a crown. To the device is added a quatrefeuilles on a stem above and the name EDMON DENISE in a banner below. This watermark is Briquet #4432 and it is found on paper dating from as early as 1556, with a lacuna until 1563.²⁰ (1563 is a particularly evocative date, given that it is also the year of La Boétie's death.) Briquet observes that since Charles IX did not become king until 1560, the 1556 date might not be accurate, although it does appear on two separate documents he examined. He surmises that they could be later copies of a document from 1556. In any case, the paper is well-attested in the 1560s and 1570s and, on April 7 1564, Denise recieved “lettres patentes” permitting him to use the device in the watermarks for his paper.²¹ As for the question of size, Briquet notes that with this very paper, Edmond Denise introduced a larger format that would gradually spread through France.²² We can thus be confident that the de Mesmes manuscript indeed offers an early witness of the text of the *Servitude volontaire* and not a late seventeenth-century copy, as Bourgeon and those influenced by him have contended.

It is worth noting that the three papermaking families identified thus far were intimately linked. The Denise and Le Bé families intermarried in the late fifteenth century. Both traced their nobility back to the same ancestor, Simonne Le Compasseur.²³ They also married into and worked closely with

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 292 n. 10. See also Françoise Bayard, “Présentation,” in *Discours de la Servitude volontaire*, ed. Françoise Bayard (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1992), pp. 7-41, at p. 25.

²⁰ Magnien identifies the watermark as Briquet #4433, which is quite similar to #4432. He suggests that the paper was made during the reign of Henri II. For reasons about to be discussed in the body of this essay, there are reasons to doubt such an early date of fabrication.

²¹ Le Clerc, *Le Papier*, t. II, p. 305.

²² Briquet, *Filigranes*, t. IV, pp. 269-270, and Gaudriault, *Filigranes et autres caractéristiques*, p. 87.

²³ Le Clerc explains that “Appartenant à la noblesse champinoise dite noblesse du ventre, les Denise avaient adopté les armoires d’une de leurs aieules, Jacquette de Bray,

the Nivelles family in the sixteenth century.²⁴ Because of their shared ancestors the Compasseurs, the arms of the Denise, Le Bé, and Nivelles families all included three compasses in pyramid formation.²⁵ Watermarks associated with these families appear on the paper used to make Vb. 49, the de Mesmes manuscript, and Français 20157. They also appear on documents bound with the Dupuy manuscript and with Français 17298.

Dupuy 239

Dupuy 239, which consists of the *Servitude volontaire*, is bound with another manuscript, Dupuy 238, entitled “Voyages, & Relations” (fol. 4r). The Dupuy copy of the *Servitude volontaire* is written on paper bearing two different watermarks, both of which are pitchers (referred to by Briquet as “pots”). One of the two is readily identifiable. It consists of a pitcher surmounted by a fleur de lys with a handle on one side and an upside down heart in the middle. This is Briquet #12561 and it is attested around the years 1572-1574 in Orléans. The papermaker has not been identified. The other watermark might be Briquet #12553, although this identification is tentative. Briquet #12553 is attested in documents from the 1560s.

On the first page of the codex, there is a note dated 13 February 1894 indicating that the “Volume” is “composé de 2 parties.” Although this does not necessarily mean that the two manuscripts were joined during Dupuy’s lifetime, certain details concerning Dupuy 238 seem worth mentioning here. The “Table du contenu de ce Livre” (5r) is on paper bearing a watermark with the name IAQVELEBE in a banner underneath the letter “B,” which is itself surmounted by a flower with five petals on a stem emerging from a crown. Briquet remarks that similar watermarks with this name are found from the 1590s “jusqu’en 1626 et peut-être au-delà” (note to #8083). Gaudriault demonstrates that there were examples into the 1630s (see the discussion of Français 17298 below). Paper “signed” Jacques Le Bé also appears in both Français 17298 and 20157, and elsewhere in Dupuy 238. The first travel account in “Voyages, & Relations” is entitled “Voyage de Monsieur d’Aramont ambassadeur pour le Roy a Constantinople es annees 1547, 1548, 1549” (7r). It is written on paper with the name IAQVELEBE in a banner under the letter “B,” in this case within a shield surmounted by a crown. This might be Le Clert #200, which is found around 1596-1606.

One final document bound in Dupuy 238 also merits mention here. Entitled “Voyage qui a esté fait de Paris iusques a la Chine par terre par le Sieur de Feine,” it is written on paper bearing a watermark composed of the

qui les tenait elle-même de sa grand’mère, Simonne Le Compasseur [...]. Perot Denise avait épousé, avant l’année 1483, Jacquette de Bray, fille de Jean de Bray le jeune, et petite-fille de Jean de Bray l’aîné et de Simonne Le Compasseur dont la fille, Marguerite de Bray, fut mariée à Jean Le Ber (ou Le Bé)” (*Le Papier*, t. II, pp. 303-304).

²⁴ See Le Clert, *Le Papier*, II: 406-7.

²⁵ On the arms, see *ibid.* Planche XXIV. and t. II. p. 303.

name EDMONDENISE inside a banner surmounted by a crown of laurels over two other crowns. This watermark is probably Gaudriault #413, which dates to the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.²⁶ Intriguingly, it or a very similar watermark is also found in a document bound with the copy of the *Servitude volontaire* in Français 20157. This paper was probably made by the son of the Edmond Denise who was the fabricant of the paper on which the de Mesmes copy of the *Servitude volontaire* is written. He is known to have collaborated extensively with Jacques Le Bé.²⁷

Français 20157

Français 20157, another miscellany comprised of various documents bound together in a codex, comes from the collections of the Sainte-Marthe brothers. Containing a fascinating array of materials, it, like the Folger manuscript, merits a dedicated study of its own. Most of the materials in Français 20157 seem to have been gathered or written with an eye towards eventual publication in one format or another. Others consist of financial analyses of possible publishing endeavors or projects to curry favor at the court. Documents in the manuscript include travel journals, regional histories, genealogies, lists of members of the French court to whom free copies of books had been distributed, a note about a possible Arabic edition of the Koran as well other publishing endeavors in “oriental” languages, and a census of parish churches in France. Documents dated as late as the 1670s are bound in the codex.

The copy of the *Servitude volontaire* found in Français 20157 is written on paper bearing a watermark comprised of two capital letter “B”s back-to-back wearing a crown surmounted by a quatrefeuilles. Another example of paper made by the Le Bé family, this is Briquet #9273 and/or perhaps Gaudriault #744 (see also Le Clerc #197). According to Briquet, the earliest attestation of the watermark is 1586; Gaudriault says it was used quite frequently in documents dated 1601 and 1602 but is also found in documents dated as late as 1618.

Based on the watermark, I propose that Français 20157 was *not* used to prepare the text of the *Servitude volontaire* appearing in the *Memoires*, as Gontarbert, Bourgeon, and Bayard have hypothesized. Instead, it is probable that Français 20157 was copied *from* the *Memoires*—or from a manuscript tradition closely linked to it.

In addition to the *Servitude volontaire*, three other documents in Français 20157 merit particular attention here. All are religious texts and they immediately precede and follow the *Servitude volontaire*. The first, which does not have a title, is on paper bearing a watermark comprised of the name EDMONDENISE in a banner under three crowns—a watermark very similar

²⁶ Le Clerc however gives 1573 for this watermark. See Le Clerc #110.

²⁷ See Gaudriault, *Filigranes et autres caractéristiques*, p. 198, and Le Clerc, *Le Papier*, t. II, p. 309.

if not identical to the paper in the Dupuy manuscript on which the “Voiage qui a esté fait de Paris iusques a la Chine par terre par le Sieur de Feine” is written. The second, entitled *Meditation Chrestienne, sur le point de la dissolution de L’Ame d’avec le corps*, is on paper bearing a watermark comprised of the capital letter “B” with a quatrefeuilles on a stem emerging out of a diamond with two leaves above and a banner reading LAQUELEBE below.²⁸ This is also similar to paper found in Dupuy 238 and Français 17298. The *Meditation* comes immediately before the *Servitude volontaire*. A third religious tract, on the subject of true happiness, follows La Boétie’s treatise.

I point to these documents for several reasons. As if its potentially inflammatory nature required containment and despite its paucity of Christian references, the copy of the *Servitude volontaire* in Français 20157 is surrounded by religious tracts about the afterlife that advocate submission to God. (In Français 17298, the *Servitude volontaire* is more ambiguously followed by texts concerning the “Divers moiens dont se sont servis nos Rois pour faire des emprunts” (fol. 142r).) Perhaps more intriguing is the fact that the two documents preceding the *Servitude volontaire* are on paper made by the Denise and Le Bé families. Might these documents have once been bound separately from the rest of the codex, or at the very least come from the same source?

Français 17298

The copy of the *Servitude volontaire* bound in Français 17298 is comprised of paper bearing two different watermarks. Both are variations of the coat of arms of France and Navarre. One has the name TDAURELLE in a banner below the shield. According to Gaudriault, Thomas Daurelle was based in Ambert and active from 1633 to 1646 (195). The second watermark has a small cartouche under the shield bearing the initials AB or AR. Delauney reproduces a watermark very similar but not identical to this one with the initials AB in the cartouche (#168). The initials stand for Antoine Boy of Chamalières and the paper bearing his initials dates to around 1640.

Français 17298 also includes paper made by Jacques Le Bé. A blank folio immediately following the *Servitude volontaire* bears a watermark with IAQVELEBE under the letter “B” which is itself surmounted by a flower with five petals on a stem. A similar watermark is found on a document near the end of the codex. After the title page, there is also a table of contents entitled “TABLE Des Pieces contenues dans ce Volume,” which has a watermark comprised of the capital letter “B” surmounted by a quatrefeuilles and with two banners below. The first banner contains the name LAQUELEBE and the second a year, which may be 1633. This is probably Gaudriault #743.²⁹

²⁸ See Pierre Delaunay, *Filigranes d’Auvergne: Catalogue des filigranes relevés sur les papiers d’archives d’Auvergne*, Mémoires de l’Académie des Sciences, Belles-Lettres et Arts de Clermont-Ferrand (Clermont-Ferrand: Académie des Sciences, Belles-Lettres et Arts de Clermont-Ferrand, 1997).

²⁹ Gaudriault notes that “L’inscription de la date reste longtemps exceptionnelle. On

Finally, many of the folios in the codex have a watermark consisting of a device with three compasses in pyramid formation within interlaced columns surmounted by a crown. In a banner below is the name NICOLASDENISE. Based on the Denise family arms, this watermark is Gaudriault #79, which dates to 1636-37.³⁰

Variants

I present and discuss below a few of the more intriguing variants found in the Folger manuscript. Often, the text in Vb. 49 is identical to that found in the de Mesmes manuscript where there are variants in the other early copies. This is not, however, always the case—sometimes the Folger manuscript offers the same reading as other manuscripts where they differ from the de Mesmes copy. Particularly suggestive are variants shared by the Folger and Ambrosian manuscripts, although there are also points where the Ambrosian manuscript has the same text as the de Mesmes copy when there is a variant in Vb. 49. Some variants are unique to the Folger manuscript. In general, where the Folger manuscript differs from the de Mesmes manuscript, the language in the Folger manuscript is simpler. At moments, the syntax is less complicated. What might be considered superfluous words or redundant phrases are frequently absent. On rare occasions the text is more expansive, as if augmented to clarify an idea. There are also occasional differences in vocabulary.

I compiled the following list of variants by comparing the text of the Folger manuscript with the text of the *Servitude volontaire* found in Nadine Gontarbert's edition and with the Ambrosian manuscript. Gontarbert follows the de Mesmes manuscript which, for better or for worse, and despite some debate, is still the privileged witness of the text.³¹ She has also conducted the most extensive collation of the early manuscripts and print editions to date, listing variants from the 1577 and 1578 editions of the *Memoires* and from Dupuy 239, Français 17298, and Français 20157. Citations below from the de Mesmes manuscript and from these other versions of the text are drawn from

remarque le cas du papetier troyen Jacques Le Bé qui, dans les années 1630, porte dans ses feuilles une date à la suite de son nom" (*Filigraanes et autres caractéristiques*, p. 27).

³⁰ Briquet explains that "Trois membres de la famille Denise ont employé ces armes : Claude, de 1575-88 environ; Edmond, de 1584-89; enfin Nicolas, en 1631 et peut-être plus tard" (*Filigraanes*, t. I, p. 96).

³¹ On some of the more peculiar readings found in the de Mesmes manuscript, see André Tournon, "Sur quelques aspérités du Discours de la Servitude volontaire," *Montaigne Studies*, vol. XI, 1999, pp. 61-76. The *édition de référence* for the *Servitude volontaire* remains that edited by Malcom Smith from the de Mesmes manuscript but this edition does not include the variants found in the other manuscripts. A version of this edition, updated by Michel Magnien, was issued in 2001: Etienne de La Boétie, *De la Servitude volontaire ou Contr'un*, ed. Malcolm Smith with additional notes by Michel Magnien, Textes littéraires français (Geneva: Droz, 2001). See the *compte rendu* of this edition by Jean Balsamo, *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, vol. LXIV, n° 3, 2002, pp. 787-789, which also offers an excellent synopsis of the state of La Boétie studies in 2002.

Gontarbert's edition. Text from the Folger and Ambrosian copies are my own transcriptions of the manuscripts.

I begin with a simple variant shared by several manuscripts.

De Mesmes: voir un million d'hommes... (fol. 1; 79)

Folger: voir ung milion de milions d'hommes... (fol. 44v)

According to Gontarbert's edition, this variant is found in both Français 20157 and 17298, and in both the 1577 and the 1578 editions of the *Memoires*. It is also found in the Ambrosian manuscript. As the following example shows, however, the Folger manuscript does not always share variants with Français 20157 and the editions of the *Memoires*.

De Mesmes: voila certe une parolle vraiment appartenante à Caton [...] la chose mesme parlera et jugera l'on a belle aventure qu'il estoit Romain, et né dedans Romme, et lors qu'elle estoit libre. (fol. 13; 101)

Folger: voyant certes une parolle vrayement appartenante à Caton.... La chose parlera et Jugera lon a belle adventure qu'il estoit Romain, et né dans la vraye Rome et lors qu'elle estoit libre. (fol. 51v)

Français 20157 and the two editions of the *Memoires* have "Voyla vrayment une parole appartenante de Caton...." The Ambrosian manuscript has a similar reading: "Voyla vrayement une parole appartenant a Caton" (63r). Only the Folger manuscript has the variant "voyant" as the first word of the passage. The particular phrasing of the evocation of Rome, which varies widely across the different copies, is also unique to the Folger manuscript.

Others variants, such as the following, are more complicated and less felicitous.

De Mesmes: vous semés vos fruicts, afin qu'il en face le degast; vous meublés et remplissés vos maisons, afin de fournir a ses pilleries... (fol. 6; 87-88)

Folger: vous cueilles vos fruicts affin qu'il en face le degast, vos meubles affin de fournir a ses volleries... (fol. 47r)

Although the point is the same in the two versions, "semés" is more compelling than "cuilles," suggesting as it does not just the harvesting of fruit that will be taken by a tyrant but also the loss of the longer-term investment involved in planting and cultivating. The absence of "remplissés" would not profoundly change the sense of the passage, but for the fact that in the Folger manuscript "meubles" has also gone from being a verb to a noun and the personal pronoun "vous" has become the possessive adjective "vos!" This fairly complicated and rather strange variant is unattested in the other manuscripts. Variants such as this one demonstrate that some care went into the process of revising the text of the *Servitude volontaire*. More care was used

than would be necessary merely to delete the occasional redundant phrase without damaging the syntax of the text. The variant even maintains a parallel structure of sorts. But that “meubles” has become the direct object of “cuilles” in a comprehensible but peculiar locution suggests that the revision process, while careful, was not meticulous. It is also worth noting that the Folger manuscript joins with Français 20157 and the 1577 and 1578 editions of the *Memoires* in offering “volleryes” where the de Mesmes manuscript has “pilleries,” as does the Ambrosian manuscript (fol. 59v).

In the following example, the Folger manuscript has a unique variant in a passage that varies greatly across the extant early copies. It also shares one minor variant with the Dupuy manuscript not otherwise attested.

De Mesmes: a Athenes ni à Sparte n'envoia il point, pource que ceus que Daire son pere y avoit envoié, les Atheniens et les Spartains en avoient jettés les uns dedans les fossés, les autres dans les puits... (fol. 11-12; 99)

Folger: a Athenes ny a Esparthe n'envoya il point pource que ceulx que Daire son pere y avoit envoyez les Atheniens et les Lacedemoniens en avoyent Jecté les ungs dedans les fossez les autres dedans les puyts... (fol. 50v)

Ambrosiana: A Spartes ny a Athenes n'envoya il point pour ce que ceux que Daire son père y avoit envoyez pour faire pareille demande, les Spartains, et les Atheniens en avoit getté les uns dans des fossez, les autres dans des puits... (fol. 62v)

The Folger manuscript is the only one to have “Lacedemonians” for “Spartains.” The prepositions in the latter part of the passage vary across the early copies of the text. Only the Folger and the Dupuy manuscripts have “dedans les fossez... dedans les puyts.” While using “Lacedemonians” in the place of “Spartains” is clearly a significant variant, I doubt that the difference between “dedans” and “dans” is helpful in establishing manuscript filiation. I also reproduce the text of this passage in the Ambrosian manuscript because it offers an interesting and otherwise unattested variant that expands the text.

In the next two passages, what could be considered redundant text appearing in the other manuscripts, including the Ambrosian copy, is absent from the Folger manuscript. The first example, a well-known and rhetorically heated moment in the *Servitude volontaire*, differs widely across the various manuscripts.

De Mesmes: Mais o bon dieu, que peut estre cela? comment dirons nous que cela s'appelle? quel malheur est celui la? quel vice ou plustot quel malheureux vice... (fol. 2; 80)

Folger: Mais o bon dieu que peult estre cela? que pouvons dire que cela s'appelle, quelle vice ou plustost quelle malheureuse vice... (fol. 45r)

Ambrosiana: Mais o bon DIEV: que peut estre cela? comment dirons nous que

cela s'appelle ? quel malheur est celui là ? quel vent ? ou plustot quel malheureux vent ? (fol. 57v)

The Ambrosian copy has the same text as the de Mesmes manuscript, with the exception of the intriguing reading of “vent” for “vice,” as Girot has discussed at some length. The second passage is a less celebrated moment but perhaps a more substantial variant:

De Mesmes: ils s'apprivoisent de lui obeir, et s'en fier tant que de lui donner quelques avantages... (fol. 2; 80)

Folger: ils sapprivoisent de luy obeyr et lui donner quelz ques avantages... (fol. 45r)

This is another passage in which there is a variant in the Folger manuscript while the Ambrosian and de Mesmes manuscripts have the same text. Although the matter is debatable, it seems to me that these two *raccourcissements* in the Folger copy do not substantially alter the sense of the passage. The same cannot be said about the next example.

In this passage, one phrase is cut from the text and another revised, perhaps to clarify the original. The result, however, is that the meaning of the text has been subtly but significantly changed.

De Mesmes: entre les gens libres c'est a l'envi a qui mieulx mieux, chacun pour le bien commun, chacun pour soi; ils s'attendent d'avoir tous leur part... (fol. 15; 106)

Folger: Entre les gens de bien et libres c'est a lenvy a qui mieulx mieulx et qui plus soigneusement cherche pour soi, la ou ils s'attendent d'avoir tous leur part... (fol. 53r)

Recognizing that a group's destiny affects that of its constituent members, in this passage La Boétie—if we can take the de Mesmes manuscript to represent La Boétie's text and ideas—strikes a balance between self-interest and the common good. The Folger manuscript, on the other hand, drops “le bien commun” and augments attention to the individual's efforts on his own behalf: “qui plus soigneusement cherche pour soi.” This revision, while perhaps common-sensical, actually contradicts the overall sense of the *Servitude volontaire*. The treatise contends that the desire to help those who are less fortunate and the desire to defend one's own interests are both natural, although they can be adulterated by voluntary servitude. According to the *Servitude volontaire*, tyranny functions by cultivating a pyramid scheme of self-interest that is ultimately short-sighted. Whether this variant is an anomaly or can be said to function in tandem with other alterations to transform the *Servitude volontaire's* overall meaning is a question that merits its own sustained analysis. The Ambrosian manuscript is almost identical to the de Mesmes manuscript, the only difference being that “tous” is in a different place in the

phrase (fol. 64v-65r).

The next two variants are quite substantial and not entirely unique to the Folger manuscript. In the following passage, a large amount of text present in the other manuscripts with the exception of the Ambrosian manuscript is absent from the Folger manuscript.

De Mesmes: entre autres choses il dit cela que les mauvais Rois se servent d'estrangers à la guerre, et les souldats ne s'osans fier de mettre a leurs gens, a qui ils ont fait tort, les armes en main. il y a bien eu de bons rois qui on eu a leur souldes des nations estrangeres, comme des françois mesmes, et plus encore d'autrefois qu'aujourd'uy; mais a une autre intention pour garder les leurs, n'estimant rien le dommage de l'argent pour espargner les hommes, c'est ce que disoit Scipion ce crois je le grand Afriquain qu'il aimeroit mieux avoir sauvé un citoyen que defait cent ennemis. mais certes cela... (fol. 16; 107)

Folger: entre autres choses il dict cela que les mauvais Rois sont contraints se servir des estrangers a la guerre et les soldoyent ne s'osans fier de mettre a leurs gens a qui ils ont faict tort les armes en main Mais certes cela... (fol. 53v)

Ambrosiana: Entre autres choses, il dit cela que les mauvais Roys se servent d'estrangers à la guerre, et les soldoyent, ne s'osans fier de mettre a leurs gens, ausquels ils ont faict tort les armes en la main. Certes ce la... (fol. 65r)

This variant is particularly revealing because the missing passage is also absent from the Ambrosian manuscript and present in the Chambéry manuscript but only in a marginal addition (Giro 564). The following example shows another striking similarity between the Ambrosian and Folger manuscripts.

De Mesmes: qu'il peut tout, et qu'il ni a droit, ni devoir aucun qui l'oblige, faisant son estat de conter sa volonté pour raison, et n'avoir compaignon aucun, mais d'estre de tous maistre. Doncques n'est pas grand pitié... (fol. 25; 125)

Folger: qu'il peult tout, et quil ny a droit ny devoir aucun qui l'oblige, Mais quil est de tous le maistre. Doncques n'est ce pas grand pitié... (fol. 60r)

Ambrosiana: qu'il peut tout. Donques n'est ce pas grand pitié... (fol. 70r)

The passage that is condensed in the Folger manuscript is entirely omitted in the Ambrosian copy. These variants, not found in the manuscripts at the BnF, certainly suggest some relationship between the Folger and the Ambrosian manuscripts, although as I have shown, there are other moments where the two copies seem to come from different textual traditions.

One last major variant is worth mentioning. On fol. 56r, the Folger manuscript reproduces Du Bellay's translation of several verses from Book VI

of Virgil's *Aeneid* (see figure 3). In both the de Mesmes manuscript and the Dupuy manuscript, what is presumably La Boétie's own translation is given in the text with Du Bellay's alongside it in the margins. The Folger manuscript is the only one to give du Bellay's translation in place of that of La Boétie.

Conclusion

The *Servitude volontaire* is famously perplexing. It has provoked questions about the date of its composition, the establishment of a definitive text, its intended meaning, even its authorship. The study of the manuscript tradition will continue to play an important role in addressing these concerns. In this essay, rather than focusing on interpretive issues, I have for the most part sought to make available information about these manuscripts that might suggest avenues for future research. What might it mean that many of the known manuscripts of the *Servitude volontaire* are written on paper made by three related families operating in and around Troyes, and that the copies of the treatise not written on such paper are bound with documents that are? Given the proximity of the papermakers to Paris and the caliber of their product, other lines of inquiry may prove more fruitful. How well can we track the sale and circulation of blank paper from the 1560s to the 1620s? Can we learn anything about—and from—the paper preferences of individuals and institutions in the same time period?

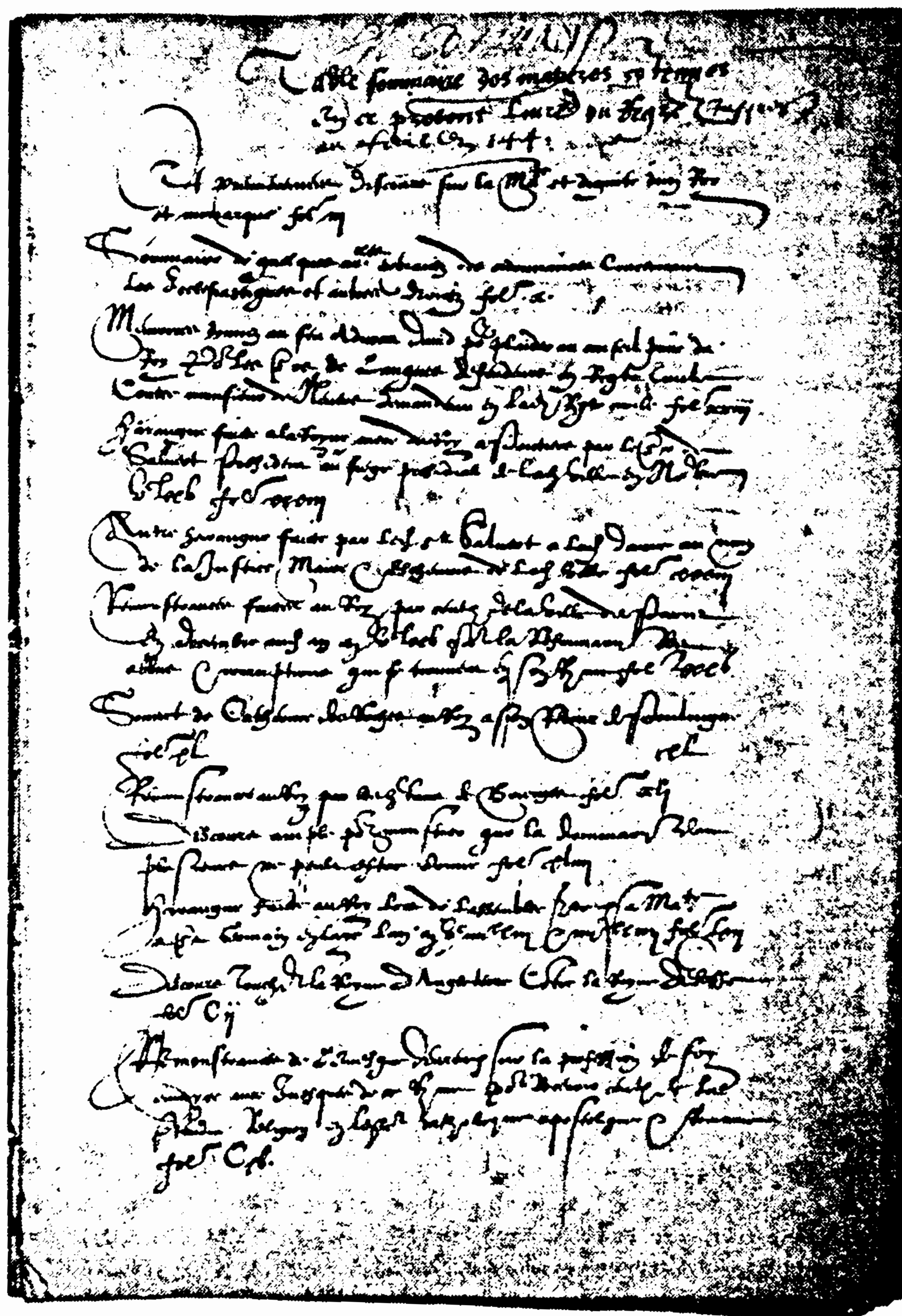
In his discussion of the manuscript tradition, Girot argues that the presence of a copy of the *Servitude volontaire* in the papers of Gian Vincezo Pinelli demonstrates that the *Servitude volontaire* circulated in ways more disparate than previously imagined. The documents bound with the Folger manuscript may give us further ideas about the circulation of the treatise. It is certainly intriguing that so many of the documents in the Folger manuscript are related to Protestantism. The fact that Vb. 49 is a copy of another miscellany—or perhaps a compilation of other documents not themselves bound together—leaves open the possibility that we might be able to identify some of the originals. Whether this information can help us better our understanding of the *Servitude volontaire* or its circulation remains to be seen. Moreover, the recent discovery of heretofore unknown manuscripts in places as disparate as Milan and Washington, DC reminds us that there may be yet more manuscripts to be discovered.

Girot also argues that the manuscript tradition is far more complicated than has usually been acknowledged and that the evidence he presents suggests that “il ne soit guère possible de faire l'économie d'une véritable édition critique de DSV” (565). In his *compte rendu* of an updated version of Malcolm Smith's edition of the *Servitude volontaire*, Jean Balsamo agrees with this finding. Rather than reinforcing the authority of the de Mesmes manuscript, writes Balsamo, Girot's study “vient au contraire remettre en question les habituelles certitudes, confirmer la coexistence de plusieurs traditions manuscrites, et compliquer un *stemma* qui semblait jusqu'alors linéaire” (789). My consideration of the Folger manuscript has led to similar

conclusions. To my mind, however, this is far from being a cause for despair. Indeed, it may be a boon. A turn away from the pursuit of the earliest manuscript and the best text and towards the possible significance of documents bound with copies of the *Servitude volontaire*, the possible circulation of the codices and the documents they contain, and the ways in which variants may nuance the meaning of individual copies of the treatise holds out great promise for further research and discovery³².

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³² I would like to thank several individuals affiliated with the Folger Shakespeare Library for their generous assistance as I worked on Vb. 49. These include Lactitia Yeandle, Emerita Curator of Manuscripts, and Heather Wolfe, the current Curator of Manuscripts, as well Elizabeth Walsh, Head of Reader Services. I would also like to thank Professor Philippe Desan for several very helpful bibliographic suggestions and my colleague Martin Eisner for putting his keen editorial eye and rampant bibliophilia at my disposal.



(Figure 1)

